

Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing
Board of Trustees
268 Washington Crossing-Pennington Road
Titusville, NJ 08560



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
November 10, 2021

Zoom Meeting due to Covid-19 Virus Social Isolation

President Maria Baratta called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:03 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Jamie Evanini; Secretary, Colleen McCourt; Joe Schenk, Treasurer; Scribe and Trustee Heather Edwards, Trustees: Michael Waas, Wendy Stasolla; Jim Sanders; Michael Howe-Smith, Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski, Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang. Absent was DLFE, Robin Pugh.

First Hour

Consent agenda (no vote)

- The Board reviewed a potential church rental request that was brought to Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang by a previous renter for a Homefront fundraiser. **There was a pulse check via Zoom** which was not unanimous (1 thumbs down vote), prompting discussion. Considerations included whether the church should be open to rentals if not fully reopened to the congregation, what qualifications (if any) should be put on the request regarding COVID precautions, and whether the rental fee should be discounted. **ACTION:** in the interest of time, the Board will finalize the decision via email.
- Susan presented revisions to several Communications-related policies that require Board review and approval. **ACTION:** The Board will review the policies offline, send any questions to Susan, and formally vote on the policies at the next Board meeting.

Review of Board Draft Goals

Board Secretary Colleen McCourt presented the final draft of the 2021-2022 Board goals, which were developed by the entire Board and staff at the September Board retreat in rough form, and further refined by Board Trustee and Scribe Heather Edwards and Trustee Wendy Stasolla.

- Brief discussion focused on a member's concern regarding the language published in CrossCurrents around "transforming the congregational culture" and its meaning and intent when viewed without the full text of the Board goals. The Board agreed that within the original context of the UUA's "7 Practices of Board Leadership," (adopted by UUCWC's Board in 2019 as an overall framework for the Board's annual goals), as well as the outlined Board goals for this

year, the language of transformation is relevant and does not need to be changed. Board Treasurer Joe Schenk followed up directly with the member to provide additional context.

- There was a vote to affirm the Board goals as drafted, which carried unanimous consent.

ACTION: The Goals will be shared with the congregation via various means, including the Council meeting, Board chat, website and a CrossCurrents article.

Stewardship Update

Board Vice President and Liaison to the Stewardship Committee, Jamie Evanini provided a status update from the 3 current members of the committee:

- They are working on their communication campaign and seeking input on information and figures to use regarding future personnel expenses.
- Joe has also been in touch with the committee and indicated that upcoming personnel costs will be a budgetary challenge.
- **ACTION:** Jamie will invite the Stewardship Committee to the December Board meeting, where they can directly observe and take part in the discussion around personnel needs.

Second Hour

Reopening/Regathering Discussion (cont'd)

In light of recent changes including vaccinations being available for children ages 5-11, as well as updated sources by the UUA regarding COVID metrics, the Board discussed a potential slow reopening of the church building beginning in December. The Board considered 7 key points regarding reopening (which had been shared by Reverend Kim as a pre-read), as follows:

- Are you in favor of changing the metrics - from NY Times to Covid Act Now?
- Are you in favor of changing the location used for decision making from where the population lives to the church locality?
- Assuming the metrics allow, are you in favor of a slow reopening (1 service in Dec, 2 in January, full reopen in February)?
- Are you in favor of continuing to use the UUA & CDC recommendations - 6 ft distance regardless of vaccination status?
- Are you in favor of in-person congregational life only open to those who can provide proof of vaccination?
- Are you willing to make clear that the staff, and therefore their families, are required to be at higher risk in order to do their job, and make clear that each staff person can set their own safety boundaries without employment repercussions?
- Given proof of vaccination, are you in favor of allowing the Choir to sing for rehearsal and/or recording in the sanctuary?

The Board began by conducting a straw poll for each item. Since there was not consensus on any point except for #1, discussion followed on each subsequent point, in which each Board and staff member participated via a discernment circle approach in order to hear input from all parties. Conversation generally focused on key areas themes including:

- Source guidelines
- Safety of all congregants and staff
- Covenantal considerations around masks, vaccination status, etc.
- Logistics of reopening plan including speed of reopening
- Direct and indirect congregational feedback to date

After in-depth discussion and discernment, the Board reached consensus on each point with some adjustments including:

- Allowing social distancing for up to 100 people in the sanctuary and up to 30 in the crossings room with recommendation that people sit in pods where possible
- Vaccination for eligible congregants is expected but we will not require proof.
- For the NJ/PA guidelines, in acknowledgement that Bucks has a higher rate of vaccination than Mercer and Mercer has a lower rate of transmission than Bucks, we are looking at both numbers. If one of those counties goes into very high risk status then we do not need to close - only if both are very high.
- We will plan for a slow reopening with the opportunity for potentially additional services; at minimum we will plan for one service in December, two or more in January and full reopening in February.
- The choir will have the discretion to make their own covenantal decision about wearing masks during rehearsals and recordings.
- **ACTION:** These plans will be shared with the congregation on 11/11.

Housekeeping & action items

- Susan, Reverend Kim and President Maria Baratta will prepare the reopening messaging referenced above.
- Maria will gather feedback from Council Meeting and Board chat.

Meeting adjourned at 9:43 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Heather Edwards

Scribe, Board of Trustees

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Executive Team, Staff and Treasurer's Report

November 2021 Executive Team Meeting Agenda

In attendance: Maria Baratta, Jamie Evanini, Colleen McCourt, Joe Schenk

- Board Goals - Colleen, Wendy and Heather have worked on refining the Board goals developed at the retreat in October. The Board will review them at the Nov meeting with an intent to adopt them.
- Reopening/Regathering plans are being modified and updated in light of the fact that children 5-11 can now get vaccinated. Using the reopening plan established earlier this year, we will look at using the protocols established based on a 'high' rate of risk as reported by NYT daily metrics. At next week's Board meeting we will hear about the plans being prepared by staff.
- Stewardship Team update will be provided by Jamie. Plans are in the works for the holiday stewardship campaign.
- In December, an update from the Personnel Committee will be scheduled.
- Council Meeting - November 16th, 7 - 9 pm. It would be nice to have many Board members there. Highlights of the meeting include a presentation on Board Goals, a presentation from the Congregational Engagement team and an update provided by the Capital Campaign Team.

November 2021
Minister Board Report
Rev. Kim Wildszewski

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rights of Passage)

Since our last meeting we held one additional tandem worship service (pre-recorded and in-person at the same time). This was our highest attendance in-person service with 68 gathering on the lawn, and 79 who signed on via Zoom for our annual All Souls service. The choir sang for the first time since we closed in March 2020!

Other services included the first of four Auction sermons; a service provided by Caryl Tipton inviting her to share reflections on her time at UUCWC over the last three decades, and this last Sunday on being hospitable to being new again in our own community once we reopen.

We are beginning to plan for Christmas Eve and the annual Children's Pageant.

If you've been signed on in recent weeks you know that we continue to struggle with getting "bumped" off of Zoom about the same time each Sunday. Though the Worship Tech team has worked through the obvious causes (something in the sanctuary not being hooked up properly – we learned this was not the issue two Sundays ago when they ran the service from their homes and different computers but were still kicked off; or possibly the link being corrupt – we learned this last Sunday it is not that after changing the link and still were kicked off) they continue to work hard at addressing the issue proactively and responsively.

Since we met I officiated Richard Knight's memorial service and committal. I will officiate the service and committal of Noelle Kahney's mother this Saturday. I am in continued conversation with Kevyn Malloy and we have planned for two services in the Spring for Tony; one at Pennswood Village and the other at UUCWC. Beverly Railsback's service will also be in the Spring at UUCWC.

One on one pastoral care via zoom and in person outdoors continues to be a significant portion of my time alongside worship and administration.

Create Community (Small Groups)

This month I've had the chance to facilitate the recent Tending the Flame (parent support / on raising UU children) monthly sessions. I've concluded the final Pathways class with the newest visitors and participants, welcoming ... new members out of 5 potential new folks. In just the last two weeks I changed the Lectio Divina practice from a recording to a twice weekly drop in small group opportunity. It's been lovely to do that practice in relationship with others.

I had the opportunity and privilege to lead the Family Chapel this past week in Robin's absence. Interestingly enough, we had nearly as many adults without children attend as we had family groups.

A note on non-member small group participants: We are raising the required fee for non-members to participate in our faith engagement program. You can see my full letter at the end of my report but in sum, given that this seems to be an avenue into the church, and at times the equivalent of Sunday attendance, and also where people are committed but not as easily encouraged to pledge (because they aren't in attendance on Sundays), we are increasing the fees essentially from \$10 / session to \$20 / session, with an invitation to give more, and similar to a pledge amount.

Change the World (Service)

At the end of this document, you will see the newest organization of roles and responsibilities that came out of a recent Worship Tech Ministry retreat I ran. I am glad to be moving Ariel more clearly into the greatest responsibility on the team, while still welcoming lay members to play important roles.

I've been attending Right Relations meetings, recently facilitating an internal listening circle to help them best identify their direction for the year and know their purpose. Similarly, I attended and led the two recent Racial Justice as a Spiritual Practice small group sessions, helping this committed group better articulate their purpose, create boundaries, set goals, and find and share resources so that their leaderless group can still move forward. And again on that same note, I have and continue to meet with the Racial Justice Ministry on their work, purpose, goals and helping create manageable expectations of the congregation in this time.

I am meeting with the Stewardship Team for the End of Year gift planning and provided them with a brief message for their publication. They are asking for a January 30th Stewardship Sunday. Susan Irgang and I both relayed that this Sunday works well for us **but I had hoped to hear from Finance and Personnel that this felt like enough time to know our needs.**

I am working on a Director of Music Ministry job description to be shared with the Personnel Committee this month. My hope is to have what we create, shared with Erin Busch before the holidays for consideration and editing, and then distributed mid Winter. **We will need to decide** if we are implementing a Music Committee for the search process or if, like other hires, we would have a committee that included staff, a personnel rep and some musicians. Either way, communication with the Choir and Caryl about our expected process should be in the next month or two, I think.

Lastly, as part of our expected reopening conversations: The Choir is requesting the ability to rehearse and record inside the sanctuary on Sunday afternoons. If they remain masked, they are requesting less space between each singer; if unmasked more. I did not feel comfortable making this decision without a conversation with the Board.

Worship Tech Roles and Responsibilities

1. Overseeing of Schedule - this is more than the schedule, this person is responsible for checking in with each team member about how often they are doing which role and general check ins about the work
2. Rachel: On Sundays Rachel is responsible for admitting, dropping links and lyrics, and counting attendance. She will be trained on spotlighting in case of emergency and as a back up. Throughout the week, Rachel gathers the lyrics that need to be shared in the chat, prepares the slides, edits the closed captioning, uploads the edited service onto fb and the website, researchers and includes any resources from Sunday in posting, and prepares the 10 minute welcome video.
3. Ariel: On Sundays Ariel is in charge of the camera and sharing the videos & slides. Throughout the week, Ariel is in charge of editing the sermon video, uploading it onto vimeo, and preparing the videos that will be used eg Robin's stories. That said, when staff emails video(s) they should send it to worshiptech@uucwc.org so that all 3 who are able to edit the videos receive the request and then as a team it is figured out who is doing what.
4. John is in charge of sound and needs to train others to be able to cover this role for him in the case of an emergency and also to share the fun! He will train lay members to do the bare minimum now (snowball mic for example) and have a long term plan of training Ariel on the soundboard.
5. Rotating lay member does spotlighting

Non-Member Faith Engagement Letter

Dear Friend,

We are so glad that you've found your way to UUCWC. We trust that as you explore the community further, you will find this to be a place and people that brings meaning to your life.

Unitarian Universalists believe that we are each whole and of worth just as we are, *and* that we are called toward growth and change. We believe we cannot do this transformative work without the help of others and so, though our journey is our own, we look to the community for help, companionship and even accountability.

One clear way that many of our members and friends engage in this practice of Unitarian Universalism is through our Adult Faith Engagement programs. You will note there is a fee for

these programs. Religion and money have always been a tricky subject, and so we believe direct communication and transparency are best.

Members are asked to contribute, on average, \$2,500 a year toward the maintenance of UUCWC. This helps cover building costs, program fees, fair share salaries for our staff and much more. Some can give more than this and do; others work toward giving at this level over time; and some might not be able to give at all, but everyone is valued equally.

Beginning January 2022, we are asking all non-member participants to also contribute toward the financial health of the community. And while we understand that your commitment may not be that of a member, your involvement in the spiritual deepening programs requires resources that are best shared by those receiving them.

Our sliding scale for non-member participants begins at \$200-\$400 (or \$20 per session, recognizing that some meet once, and others twice, a month).

This fee does not cover the costs associated with programs like Chalice Circles or Wellspring, and so for those who can, we ask you to consider giving beyond this \$20 / session. What do you receive besides the resource packet? What gift might affirm or honor the care, community and growth that unfurls in that space?

Again, we are so glad that your journey has brought you to UUCWC. If you have any questions about this or anything related to the congregation or Unitarian Universalism, please be in touch.

With care,

Rev. Kim Wildszewski, Minister minister@uucwc.org
Robin Pugh, Director of Faith Engagement dre@uucwc.org

Susan Irgang

Administrator BOT Report for November 2021

Create Community

COVID rate updates: According to the NY Times tracking, as of 11/8/21, Bucks and Mercer are at the “Very High” risk category, with cases per 100,000 at 24 and 13 respectively. I met with Rev. Kim, Robin Pugh and Maria Baratta for a discussion regarding current COVID rate tracking and the impact of changes in vaccine availability for children aged 5-11 on our current guidelines.

I am asking for Board input this meeting on the possibility of renting UUCWC facilities when the church may be closed for our own use due to COVID. A long-time renter, who has been our primary source of rental income in recent years, has asked to use the church on New Year’s Day. This could be accomplished without risk to our volunteer rental coordinator. Additionally, the renter is donating their talents, time and profits to HomeFront and asked if we would be interested in discounting our rental rate to be part of that donation effort. The cost of the rental is \$800; we could charge full price, discount that rate, or waive the fee altogether. Currently UUCWC supports HomeFront with direct contributions annually, through reimbursement of meal costs for the Tutoring program, backpack drive and food drives.

I worked with the Stewardship Committee to review mailing needs, create labels and facilitate purchases of some materials for the End of Year campaign, scheduled to launch later November 21. As well, I worked with the team on issuance of quarterly statement creation and messaging. The team would welcome additional members before the pledge drive discussions begin; Board suggestions welcomed.



We promoted and offered outdoor services on 10/31; Roberto Santiago and I set up for the service attended by about 68 people, including the choir. More photos are on the [UUCWC Community Building Facebook page](#). The outdoor setting on our fall enhanced grounds was well received.

Celebrate Life

Our current membership is 281 Church Members (includes 7 Virtual Members), 18 Friends, 45 Participants and 30 Attendees. As the numbers show, while our membership is officially 282, we are actively serving a system of 374, not counting children or visitors.

Change the (UUCWC) World

With Communications responsibilities now primarily based in the office, I have included revised Communications Team policies in a separate folder within the Agenda folder. It contains both the originals (PDFs) and proposed revisions (Word docs) for 7 of the 8 policies created by the Communications Committee from 2011-2017. One policy about Bulletin Boards will be held for revision until post construction, as there will be fewer bulletin boards and the future use of them may be reimagined. These updates are in keeping with the Board goal of capturing institutional wisdom and are ready for Board review and approval.

I worked with Steve Saddlemire and Mike Muccioli to review and update our rental rates; most rates continued to be competitive. Revised rental rates will now be published on the website in hopes of improved marketing of our space for future rentals.

I have begun work with MJ Hansen on changes to and administration of upcoming changes to our security of files and emails, following recommendations and discussions with consultant Mike Hudgin. This will take restructuring and education of users, and will be done over the course of the next few months.

This month had several Facilities related activities:

- Clearing of leaves from roof drains and repair of flashing around skylight by George Faulkner (former Building chair)
- Purchase of a chainsaw to deal with numerous tree issues on the property; consultation with an arborist regarding trees that need removal/pruning
- Review of policies that govern the acceptance and maintenance of Memorial plantings on church grounds

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: Nov. 8, 2021

Re: Monthly DLFE Report

Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)

- We are beginning to plan for Christmas Eve and the annual Children's Pageant.
- I continue to be live on zoom in the sanctuary for the time for all ages. I continue to host Family chapel from 9-9:30 on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month. Kim led Nov. 7th's chapel while I'm on vacation.

Create Community (Small Groups)

- I am planning what our children's program will look like when we reopen. What the children will be doing, what safety measures we need to have in place, who will teach, what our children need right now. There are many factors to consider.
- Kim and I considered and decided to raise nonmember adult faith engagement fees. See Kim's report for the letter going out to our nonmembers.
- Chalice Circles continue to grow and evolve. We have added another circle for couples facilitated by Joe and Michele Schenk. We now have 10 groups. 6 Board members (of 9) participate in chalice circles. Three of those are facilitators.
- I'm connecting with visitors about the pathways class, faith forward and other ways to get involved with UUCWC. The Romeos have been especially welcoming. From an email from one of our new members: "Thanks Robin. Your connecting efforts have been part of the attraction for joining. I continue to track and welcome visitors in our Sunday services both on line in the chat and after services and in person."

Save The World

- I am recruiting people to be OWL teachers. OWL trainings are beginning to happen after a 2-year hiatus. UUCWC needs OWL teachers for the 3 classes we offer. (K-1, 5-6 and 8-9). This is a big task. It involves recruiting appropriate people to be OWL teachers and matching them with a training that happens on a specific weekend that fills up quickly. There are very few trainings per year that are within driving distance from UUCWC. The UUA's training is virtual. Some churches are organizing their own trainings and offering them in person.
- I am co-leading 1st and 3rd evening fire pits for our 6th-9th graders. These get-togethers are a fun, safe and supportive space for our teens.

Professional Development and Support

This primarily serves as an FYI about my professional development opportunities that benefit my leadership at UUCWC.

Once a month I meet with UU religious educators in the metro NY area to share information about programs and offer support.

This fall, I'm taking Beloved Conversations "within" for religious professionals and 2 spiritual direction courses, one for children and one for adults. The one for children will end this month. It has been excellent for learning more about the spiritual lives of children.

I see a Spiritual Director monthly.

Treasurer's Report

November 4, 2021

Statement of Income and Expense as of the close of the September Month were shared in the pre-reads.

Summary:

- All financial indications are positive with a \$25k positive variance to date
- Bank Account Balances total \$1.29 million:
 - o \$475k Operating combined balances
 - o \$609k Capital Campaign
 - o \$230k Endowment
 - o -\$20k payables

Year to Date Finances as of 10/31/2021

Income	Expense
Sunday "Plate" 8,050	Staff 105,223
Pledge 158,981	Operations 30,134
Paycheck Protection Forgiveness 10,000	Program 6,367
All Other 4,334	Denomination 6,305
181,365	Debt Service 8,488
	156,517
Net Income (Loss) 24,848	

Financial highlights are as follows through September 30

Overall Budget Tracking: \$25k Positive Variance Year to Date

Income: Negative variance: \$3k (\$3,000 less income than budgeted)

1. "Plate Income" lower by \$2.5k
2. Pledge Income lower by \$3k
3. Solar Panels: \$2.7k

Expense: Positive Variance: \$25k (\$25,000 less spend than budget)

1. **Staff:** positive variance \$10k reflective of continued COVID-related savings in sexton expense savings and delayed Accompanist billing
2. **Operations:** positive variance \$9k reflective of reduced utility, maintenance, office supplies and tech expenses
3. **Program:** positive variance \$6k reflective of reduced expenses associated with the continued building closure
4. **Debt & Denomination Expenses:** To Budget (no variance)

Reminder Items:

1. A **looming budget deficit** of an estimated \$60k for the next fiscal year – 2022-2023 based on current and increasing staffing plans including the Bookkeeper role
2. Hiring plans for a Professional Bookkeeper/ Controller
3. Bookkeeping software upgrade to Quickbooks Online